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STRICTURES
ON
AGRICULTURE.

Wherein a DISCOVERY of the
Physical Cause of VEGETATION,
OF THE
FOOD of PLANTS,
AND THE
RUDIMENTS of TILLAGE,
Is attempted.

Addressed to the LANDHOLDERS and FARMERS of
GREAT-BRITAIN and the COLONIES.

By JOHN DOVE.

Fond man! the vision of a moment made!
Dream of a dream, and shadow of a shade!
Hast thou explor'd the secrets of the deep!
Where shut from use unnumber'd treasures sleep!
Where down a thousand fathoms from the day,
Springs the great fountain, mother of the sea?

YOUNG.

L O N D O N:

Printed for the AUTHOR; and sold by *J. Millan*, at *Charing-Cross*; *S. Bladen*, in *Pater-noster Row*; and *J. Cooke*, in *Cornhill*. MDCCLXX.

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TO THE
READER.

IF I am told I have disgraced a good song, by my manner of singing it ; it would give me infinite pleasure to hear the objector, if he understands the rural gamut, sing it better : for I had rather write truth in rhapsody, than falsehood in rhetoric.

The following sheets were extorted, not by pride nor envy, but by a conviction that the professors of a science, in order to profit themselves or the public, ought first to be acquainted

with its rudiments.----- A triangle is a dead and useless figure to the man ignorant of its nature and properties; but when an explication of that geometrical figure is understood, the same man with rapture sees its use, doubts no more, but enters on practice without error. Men will do the same in Agriculture, when its rudiments are known.----- But how are they to be known? Not by taking the swine, or the stupid Egyptians, for original tutors, but by attending to the revelation of the GOD of Nature, who only knows adequately what Nature is, and how to unfold it: which he has done*
to

* The former recommended by Mr. Jethro Tull, *Horse-hoeing husbandry*, p. 177; the latter by the author of *Georgical essays*, p. 3.

to the utmost limits of our understanding, by Moses and the prophets, Gen. i. 11, 12. ii. 5, 6. xlix. 25. Deut. xxxiii. 13. Job xiv. 7, 8, 9. Isaiah xxviii. 24, &c. In these places, and many more that might be quoted, the very arcana of Nature are exposed, on which the doctrine and practice of Agriculture depend or are founded. Here truth is as it were embodied and made visible, while ten thousand experiments made at random will leave her concealed, and the man in a labyrinth. Here the fertility of the earth is made to depend, not on compost, but on a supply of that nutriment which Nature constantly provides for her three kingdoms.

Here

Here the earth is considered only as a vessel, in and upon which the vegetable scenes are shifted, the stage on which the vegetable wonders appear; and no otherwise the cause of vegetation, than a flute, &c. on which a tune is played, is the cause of the tune. This is a truth, founded on invincible reason, deducible from the principles above, provable by experiments, and never to be given up.

The physical cause of vegetation has not been touched or approximated by any writer on Agriculture that I have seen; nor the food of plants ascertained: the former they have cautiously nibbled at; about the latter no two of them are agreed, whether 'tis earth, water, salt, oil, or what.

Indeed

Indeed the discovery lies far above the reach of all the home-spun philosophy of the human mind; and he must be a petty philosopher that knows not that, and a very petulant one too, who rejects physical axioms from the hands of the prophets of the GOD of Nature: for there is not a plant or herb of the field, but convicts our reason of ignorance. The treasures of the snow, hail, darkness, &c. do the same. The meanest object in the natural world is quite sufficient to check the philosophic pride of the most conceited: but vain man will yet be wise, tho' born like a wild ass's colt!

If it be thought that I am out of my sphere, let me be detected for thinking

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ing otherwise ; or if I have treated our philosophers with half the rudeness that many of them have treated Moses and the prophets, they are doubtless at liberty to make what reprisals they please ; and if they treat me with the same degree of rudeness and ill-manners, and misrepresent me as they have heretofore ; yet, nevertheless, my kind wishes for good old Tobit's collyrium for their eyes shall follow them ; perhaps it may cure their squinting.



STRICTURES

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AGRICULTURE, &c.

IT is a plain matter of fact, that the greatest impediment to the improvement of barren land has been an infatuated attachment to a system of philosophy perfectly unnatural. Had our philosophers attended less to their own conjectural opinions about the mode of vegetation, and more to the real agency of Nature in her vegetable gaiety; or, had they, instead of gratifying their scientific pride, attempted to disco-

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ver the physical cause of vegetation ; or if it had ever entered into their heads that Moses and the Prophets had given a clearer account of Nature, and of her operations, than has been given by any, or by all other men ; or that the doctrine of vegetation is delivered by them in the most plain and simple language, and that nothing but an indulged ignorance and pride could have prevented their seeing it ; or had they had humility to study Nature as directed by those divine philosophers, the surface of the earth had worn another form than it does. Moses wrote not for fools, nor was himself a fool ; for he has given a full and fair account of the mechanical laws of Nature, the not understanding of which hath
been,

been, and is, the true reason why our philosophers are scarcely agreed upon any thing. They differ nearly as much about their morality as about their philosophy, and for the same reason. Notwithstanding it will always be an incontestible truth, that a true knowledge of Nature will be a constant source of pleasure to the intelligent mind. Just conceptions of Nature, as it is revealed to us by the GOD of Nature, cannot fail to elevate the mind far above that sordid selfishness which is the child of ignorance and error. And when we see the profusions of Providence, and consider the connection we stand in to each other in society, we cannot but infer, that the least degree of happiness communicated to an indi-

vidual is an addition to our own; and should we fail in the attempt to make our fellow-creatures happy, or more so than they are, the consciousness of having designed it is compensative: but if we succeed in effecting the happiness of the community, it is presumed to be the highest achievement we can arrive at in our social capacity. This is social religion, this is true policy, this is the sum of morality: he that designs not the welfare of his fellow-creatures as well as his own, in all his actions, (whatever his pride may prompt him to think of himself) is an unworthy member of society, fit only to live among wild beasts. Our talents are not our own; nor were they given us exclusively. The tyrant, the monopolist,

polist, the sordid niggard, the grinding usurer, the biting, the covetous wretch, and all who think themselves born only for themselves, will grin at this, and call the man a fool, that broaches such doctrine. A fool indeed he must be, and a perfect stranger to the manners of mankind, who expects the world to practise it.

But here we shall leave every man to his own reflection, while we submit a few truths to the consideration of the public; presuming that nothing but mere incredulity can object; but that shall create no concern.

A letter in the *Public Ledger* of 25 April 1769, determined me to put an end to what I had before begun: it is as follows:

“ As

“ As the extraordinary efforts that
 “ have lately been made in France
 “ for the advancement of husbandry,
 “ by improving their waste lands,
 “ and procuring a valuable breed of
 “ sheep, do not a little affect this
 “ country, I have inclosed part of a
 “ Memoir published a short time
 “ ago by a member of the society of
 “ Rouen, in hopes it will excite
 “ a spirit among our Gentlemen
 “ and Farmers, when they see the
 “ steps our indefatigable neighbours
 “ are taking to rival them, to pre-
 “ serve and improve the breed of
 “ sheep, which has lately been too
 “ much neglected in this kingdom.

RUSTICUS.”

The Memoir is too long to insert
 here ; it may be seen in the Ledger
 referred to above.

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The plan there laid down, it is presumed, must be looked on as more formidable in its effects to this kingdom than a declaration of war against it would be : nothing but the luxury of the rich, and the extreme poverty of the poor in France, can prevent their execution of it.

We cannot avoid observing here, that tho' provision in France is not at half the price it is in England, yet that wise nation thinks it good policy to reduce it lower, by improving their waste land, and multiplying their breed of sheep ; and tho' the lowering the price of provision seems not to be their object, every one sees it must be the consequence of their executing the plan they have laid down. They know the rents of land,
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the price of provision and that of labour, must be kept in a due proportion, or that at last the people will rebel. They know also, that provisions can never be rendered too cheap in any country where the equilibrium above is maintained; and that that country is near the eve of ruin, where that is neglected. The price of provisions will, perhaps when it is too late, regulate the price of rents and labour: have we not therefore the highest reason to be surprized, when we view the consequences of having provisions held up at the exorbitant price they have been at for seven years past, and to be ashamed of it, as a piece of policy purely English? How detestable must such policy appear when it is viewed in its true

true light, as an artifice of the rich to accumulate money by starving the poor, by which many of them have actually been starved, and are now dead? But since we have, by the good providence of God, the means in our hands of counteracting the French in this point, shall we not be roused into activity? Many of the descendants of that nation, whose forefathers were exiled, and fled hither for refuge, will despise us if we sit still at this important juncture; surely they will think it time to return, when they see this kingdom rivalled in the articles of wool, skins, &c.

In the early part of life, my father being a farmer, I was a shepherd, and have frequently wished I had never quitted the flock; yet,

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tho' I am not now able to take the care of one, I will undertake to find pasturage on the now most barren land in the kingdom for double the number of sheep now in it, provided it be not all rock, swamp, nor all sand.

By the best computation hitherto made, it appears there is in this kingdom twenty-seven millions of square acres of land ; others in their calculations enlarge the number greatly ; ten millions of those acres, upon a moderate calculation, are presumed to remain uncultivated and barren : can there be a doubt if one hundredth part of such barren lands, situate within fifty miles of our capital cities and trading towns, were put into tilth and cultivated (with or
with-

without enclosing), but it would be a greater benefit to this realm than one hundred millions of square acres conquered and subjected to British dominion in Asia, &c. By the former, the price of provisions would be greatly reduced, and nearly the whole number of our poor employed, to the emolument of their employers, themselves and their families; by the latter, the price of provisions is not reduced, but continues to advance; and, contrary to all sound reason and good policy, the poor are quitting the kingdom, or perishing at home in idleness and discontent.

It is a problem, whether we have not as much waste and barren land, in proportion to the number of

square acres in this kingdom, as they have in France: if so, we are upon a par with them on that account: but we have surely the advantage of them in having no wolves to destroy our sheep, while they are infested with such prodigious numbers of them in the winter.

The expence of cultivating barren land hath been the reason of its being neglected; if it could, as it surely may be removed, is it possible to suppose cultivation would be neglected? We hope to make it appear, that such an improvement in agriculture is practicable, as would infallibly increase the revenue, recover the depopulation of the kingdom, satisfy our poor with bread, refund the proprietors the expence of cultivation in two years,

years, and leave them possessed of plentiful estates, by turning such land into fruitful fields. This cannot appear strange, except to those who are unacquainted with the mechanical operations of nature. But of our gentlemen and farmers, who ought to know most of those matters, how few of them can give the true reason of fallowing their own land? Their forefathers did it, therefore they do it, and think they find their profit in losing a whole year's crop, while their land rests, to gather strength as they conceive. But in this it is presumed they are mistaken; for the true reason of fallowing land is not to give rest: for hath not some of our barren land rested ever since the creation? Is it grown
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the better thereby? or are they able to give the reason why it is not? or will their manner of tillage give it heart? No, indeed it will not. Is there a way that will? Indeed there is. Has it been tried? It has ten thousand times, and because of its simplicity as often overlooked. Our philosophers are riding their hobby-horses in the starry regions; they chuse to explore new worlds, gaze at the stars, observe the transit of Venus, &c. they scorn to examine the world where their feet stand; they know, or think they know, a vast deal over their heads, but alas little, very little under their feet; and tho' they walk upon a casket of jewels, upon a repository of inexhaustible treasure, they think it but a dull and phlegmatic lump,

lump, too foul for them to concern themselves about, and below the dignity of their profession to look down upon. But what if they could discover fifty thousand worlds among the stars, of what use would they be to us? our corn, wine, oil, &c. are of nearer growth, or we must starve. Starving ought therefore to be the fate of him who neglects or despises the culture of the ground for the study of the stars; because a single acre of land cultivated, in our world, is of more worth than all the imaginary worlds our philosophers have been peeping after for so many centuries. Is it not time, therefore, for them to quit their telescopes, and mind their plough-shares; nor suffer a thistle in their corn-fields to reproach

proach them any more? for while they do, a vermin-killer is a more useful man than they; and he that first made a mouse-trap, of more use to society than all the philosophers now in Europe. What have they been doing, but amusing the world with a number of fruitless speculations? Have they not committed the whole of our agriculture to rusticks? Therefore it can be no wonder that, notwithstanding their boasts of an enlightened age, and of their great skill in the arts and sciences, we should not yet know how to kill the noxious weeds in our corn-fields, nor how to enrich our land without compost: a philosophy deficient in both these ought to be hissed out of the world; for upon Agriculture the well-

well-being of the kingdom, its true riches, and the arts and sciences depend.

The ancients thought agriculture an honourable science; the antediluvians, the patriarchs, the kings of Israel and Judah, the kings of Persia, the emperors of Rome, the philosophers, poets, patriots, statesmen, &c. esteemed it an accession of honour to have their names dignified with such rural marks as have consecrated their memories, and transmitted them to us thro' so many ages. They made it their study, and tilled their own land; Dioclesian quitted his empire, Attalus his throne, to cultivate the earth; Cyrus, that mighty monarch, gloried more in it than in conquering kingdoms; Nu-

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ma,

ma, Lucinius Cincinnatus, the Pi-
 soes, the Fabii, Cicero, &c. disdain-
 ed not to exercise themselves in the
 culture of their land. The greatest
 men of antiquity thought it not be-
 neath them to write on tillage: Hi-
 ero, Philomater, Archelaus, Zeno-
 phon, Cato, Varro, Columella, Pli-
 ny, Virgil, Palladius, Mizaldus, Cur-
 tius, &c. Indeed a modern author
 deplores the time he miserably lost
 in pursuit of their speculations: the
 reason of which was, those men fail-
 ed in the most essential point, from
 their not having a proper clue to
 guide them: for to vegetation there
 is a path which no fowl knoweth,
 and which the vulture's eye hath not
 seen, the lion's whelps have not trod-
 den, nor the fierce lion passed by it:

nor

nor will it ever be investigated by the men who oppose their reason to that Revelation where it is recorded, as it were in burnished brass. Therefore it is that all our philosophical writers on agriculture, who proceed upon their own rational disquisitions, reason point blank against it, and overlook the first principles in vegetation. By this I intend not to insult the reason of mankind, but if possible to limit it to its proper sphere. We find the works of GOD perfectly inscrutable; they are no more to be found out to perfection than their Author; but none more so than vegetable nature; the mode of it is invisible, performed by invisible agents, of which agents the untaught reason of man could never have had any intelligence,

gence, if He that teacheth man wisdom had not made them known; and even then, from the contractedness of our understandings, it is but a small part of his works can be known. If any one retorts upon me here, and asks, Did you come at it by revelation? I answer, Not by an enthusiastic intuitive one, but by that explicit revelation which God gave to Moses and the prophets, I did, where another man may come at it as well as myself. Will the reader now call me a phantast? To determine whether that appellation belongs most to himself or me, I would recommend to him to inform himself how he became a rational creature; and if he cannot investigate that upon evidence, he must live and
will

will die a fool. If I am taxed with pride and vanity, I can only answer, that in this matter I am not conscious of it. However that may be, I have no pride to prompt me to reason about objects or agents concerning which my senses can give me no information ; and as our senses are not limited to one exclusive of another, but the same senses are common to all men, I must conclude they have escaped the senses of all men as they have mine. Then how are we to come at intelligence about those objects or agents ? We will be wonderfully obliged to the wonderful man that can make the discovery. But as we think no man can reason without principles, or reason right without given ones, we
should

should be the more indebted to the candid Gentleman that would set us right in this point, if we are wrong. But if our Gentleman conceives himself able to reason without data, we hope he will shew us the root of the three natural colours (for there are no more in nature), and tell us how Nature operates in tincturing the wheat-rose red, the crow-feet blue, and the cowslip yellow, and in variegating the tulip, &c. &c. and if he cannot do that, the least we can do is to laugh at him : for we cannot conceive that any course of previously-devised experiments can help us at all in these matters, since they must all leave us liable to mistake, labyrinthed in conjectures, conundrums, and absurdities : nor can any thing
but

but Revelation correct the understanding concerning such invisible objects and agents ; for without that, their existence had never been known, much less their operations. By Duhamel we find the French philosophers greatly at a loss here (to say no more) ; they are agreed upon nothing ; yet we must believe the French to be as learned a nation as any in Europe, and their philosophers in nothing behind those of our own nation. The greatest men amongst them have been indefatigable to investigate the process of Nature in her vegetable productions, to very little purpose : they have tortured her to force a confession from her ; then they strangled and forced her out of her way, and committed rapes

rapes in abundance upon her to no purpose, for she will not be forced. She would do all for us that we want, if we would not obstruct but follow her ; but instead of that, we affront her, by drenching her with poisonous compounds, and by throwing dung upon her face : For what ? To feed her vegetables forsooth. This is rebellion against her, she has food of her own, congenial to all their natures, to feed them with, by which they are nourished, whilst all we can provide for them would starve them. This is found true by experience, as will appear below. This food is coeval with and founded upon the mechanical laws of Nature ; they must fail, or our doctrine is infallible.

We

We will therefore venture to maintain, upon the most indubitable authority, that there is in nature an inexhaustible seminal, viscous humidity; that this humidity, in its original state, is perfectly unspecified; that it is continually generated by a conjugation of the material heavens and the earth; that from the former it is without intermission descending; and that it continues to do so, to recruit itself and to replenish the earth, as long as nature remains. And tho' this down-flow exceeds all the channels of the sea, it descends in a dead silence, and is imperceptible till it is down; then it becomes the nutriment of Nature, the food of vegetables, and of all her trees with their fruit; supplies and

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restores the ardour of the earth, when her numerous products have been sucking her breasts, and, as one would think, exhausted her. The vegetable tribes imbibe this unspotted mirror of divinity, this heavenly confection, specify and assimilate it into their substance, as is evident beyond contradiction in the grafting different kinds of branches upon the same crab-stock; the stock receives the seminal juice at its roots, from thence it ascends to the branches: if the stock had none but natural branches upon it, this humid vapour would be indisputably specified from its universal form into the nature of the stock, its branches and fruit, and become a very sour juice; but if apple, pear, or plum branches are grafted upon

upon the stock, when this feminal, humid vapour arrives at the incisure of inoculation, it is again specified into the nature of the branch, whether of apple, pear, or, &c. Sometimes it bursts the bark, and congeals into a gum, which when fresh is exceeding subtil and glutinous; had it passed on, it would have been specified as above. In the more northern climates, the cold condenses the surface of the earth, and imprisons this vapour till the sun returns; he unlocks the dungeon, and sets the captive at liberty, to perfume and adorn the face of the earth with fruit, flowers, &c. “ We may observe
 “ something like this in snow that
 “ falls in winter, which being taken
 “ up while it is fresh, and di-

“gested in a glass for twenty-four
 “hours, if then you open the glass
 “while the solution is warm, you
 “shall perceive in the breath of the
 “water all the odours of the spice-
 “islands or of Lebanon; look at
 “the bottom of the glass, you will
 “find there a fat grey slime, not un-
 “like Castile-soap; separate all the
 “phlegm from it by a soft distilla-
 “tion in balneo, and put the resi-
 “due in a bolt-head well stopt, in
 “a dry heat of ashes; keep it warm
 “for an hour or two, and the glass
 “will fly to pieces.” Here you may
 perceive the first efforts of Nature
 to prepare nutriment for her vege-
 tables. This she sends down from
 heaven in snow, hail, rain and dew;
 the earth receives it as a sponge does
 water,

water, and concocts it. In its sublimation from the under stratum, it is absorbed at the surface by the vegetable kingdom, whose immediate aliment it is. Thus, by a kind of confederacy between the material heavens and the abyfs, which has been carried on ever since the first mist went up from the earth to water the whole face of the Adamah, the evaporations of the one and the defluxions of the other meeting in the vast expanse or circulatory of the air, by the dissolving power of which the most united and specified bodies are unspecified, and reduced into one general principle or universal form, and are specified again out of that general form or principle, as above,

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“ Common quicksilver hath as it
 “ were a miraculous union of parts,
 “ and is of all compounds the stron-
 “ gest except gold: for if you distil
 “ it by the retort ten thousand times,
 “ it will be quicksilver still, notwith-
 “ standing all those reiterated rare-
 “ factions of its body: but if you
 “ take ever so large a quantity of it,
 “ and vapour it away in the open air
 “ once, it will never come to quick-
 “ silver again; for the fumes of it
 “ will be lifted up to the wind,
 “ where it will suffer a total dissolu-
 “ tion, and will never return more,
 “ but in rain, dew, or, &c. This
 “ is the very reason why also the
 “ vapours of the earth, &c. are lift-
 “ ed up into what we call the mid-
 “ dle region of the air; for there
 “ the

" the wind is moist and cold, and
 " hath most liberty ; and in no other
 " place can their resolution which
 " Nature intends be perfected. Job
 " was not ignorant of this, when
 " he complains of the decays of his
 " own body, chap. xxx. 22. Thou
 " liftest me up to the wind, thou
 " makest me to ride upon it, thou
 " dissolvest my substance."

We are not to think the quick-
 silver returns no more ; for it not
 only may but must return, thus dis-
 solved and dissipated like all other
 evaporations, but in an unspecified
 state. It has only taken wing to
 return, impregnated with the blef-
 sings of the heavens above, to fur-
 nish us with the blessings of the
 earth from beneath, to freight itself
 with

with the treasures of the heavens, and to consign their large effusions to the fields, to enrich with vegetable life a languid world. The rain, dew, &c. were and are the Prometheus that stole the heavenly fire; whose whole office it is to fetch it down for the supply of our wants. We may be convinced of this by the shining drops of dew in the summer. Those transparent chests contain a richer treasure than the mines of Potosi. It descends in a tiffany vestment, impregnated as above; in its fall it settles into drops, the sun darts his rays upon them, and exhales the phlegm, which goes up for a fresh supply, whilst the earth, vegetables, &c. drink in the fire, spirit, and gum that it brought down, and assimilate it;

it; for simple water feeds nothing, but the gum or astral balsam that is in it feeds all things. This is the ground and foundation of all the augmentation and multiplication in the natural world; this is the true natural cause of the growth or increase of our corn, hay, trees, &c.* This is the fire, the aliment brought down from heaven by our Prometheus; the want of this aliment is the reason why the fish in ponds die for want of rain; and tho' there is water enough in the pond, yet the vegetables growing there, that never raise their heads above the surface of the water, perish also for want of

F rain.

* Prov. iii 20. Job xiv. 9. Psal. civ. 13. Isai. xxx. 23. Gen. xxvii. 28. &c. &c.

rain. I might here adduce a multitude of instances of the like kind, in confirmation of the doctrine above.

The food of vegetables hath been mistaken totally by all the writers on agriculture that I have seen, and while men follow their own fancies, and draw conclusions from their own preconceived imaginations, how can it be otherwise? In vain do men talk of Nature, while they dwell on their own conceptions, and will make no use of her principles, nor be guided by her Author: hence it is that they have mistaken the most filthy composts for vegetable food, at the same time making it a matter of as great nicety to know what compost will best agree with their soil, as for

a physician to know what physick is best for a man groaning under a complication of diseases; yet confess, that vast tracts of manured land in Europe have been rendered barren for many years by a misapplication of composts; and that instead of physick to the sick land, it has proved poison. This must always be the case, till the true food of vegetables is known; as also how to bring it into contact with the roots of the plants: and that philosophy must not only be very defective, but I think worse than ignorance, that cannot tell how far this celestial treasure is put in our power, to direct its energy for our own profit.

Whether the true food of vegetables is here discovered or not; or

whether it is pointed out sufficiently plain or not, the reader is to judge: but when he has made himself master of the subject, I shall have no fear of his damnatory sentence. But what if the book be condemned to the flames, and the author to contempt, for daring to plead for a true Mosaic natural-philosophy? it will not surprize him: but even then, he will not submit a truth of so much importance as the food of vegetables to vote; for when it is contested, he has more to say in support of it: for it is evident, that among all the systems of the sciences not one of them is so deficient, or rather so completely erroneous, as the present system of agriculture: yet by the state of their agriculture, the liberty, policy,

policy, and philosophy of any kingdom may be known: where the fields are barren, the markets empty, and provisions dear; tyranny, ignorance, and want of policy are conspicuous. In particular cases, when we see barren fields, we know the owner is either a fool or a sluggard, or that he is under oppression.

I shall no doubt be put in mind of the different soils to be met with, sometimes in the same field; and that they are not all to be treated alike. It is granted: a marsh overflowed with salt water at the return of every tide, is not to be treated like a mountainous country; the former is not fit to grow cucumbers, nor the latter osiers: but it will not follow from thence, that
either

of them wants compost : for mixing the different soils is found by experience to effect more than all the dung upon earth. Who ever saw a dunghil produce any thing but rank weeds ? and when spread upon the ground, it promotes the growth of weeds : the reason of which is so plain, that it would be almost affronting the understanding of the reader to mention it. We see the heat of the brutes stomach destroys not the vegetable quality of the seeds of plants. All the ardor that can be given to the ground, by compost of any kind, is but temporary ; that by dung of a very short duration ; that by horns, hoofs, oyfter-shells, &c. of a longer ; but all is but a kind of quacking with the earth, and frequently

quently ruins its constitution, as is confessed by Duhamel, and is evident by the taste of our vegetables near London.

But a more permanent recruit of the earth's strength may at a much less expence be obtained than that by an annual compost. By this I do not mean to seclude the use of all compost, where it can be come at free-cost, such as penning of sheep, &c. but to dissuade the farmers from the enormous charge they are at from year to year for manure, when, if they would fallow their land oftener, and kill their weeds, they would find their profit in it more than in all the composts they use. I have known farmers, who have been at a vast expence for manure ; another,

other, who could not bear that expence, by mere industry has had better crops, without any manure at all, than the former had with all theirs.

Furius Vefinius, a peasant, being accused before the people of Rome for a sort of wizardry done by him upon his neighbours lands, which, tho' of greater extent, yet yielded not so good crops as his that were less, took no other course to justify his innocence, than to bring with him on the day of his appearance the instruments of agriculture, kept in exceeding good order, beseeching his judges to believe that he had made use of no other wizardry than those, together with abundance of pains and watching, which to his sorrow he knew not how otherwise to represent.

The

The best orator in Rome could not have defended the peasant so well. Strange then that the filthy part of our husbandry should not long since have been laid asleep by the absurdity of it; but that our farmers should still continue to choak the ground with dung, to increase the growth of weeds in their corn-fields!

It is by the labour of the hands, and the simple operations of Nature, the earth is rendered permanently fertile, not by composts and stinking dung. See Genesis xxvii. 27, 28. I shall only observe, רוח is the root of the word here rendered smell; its idiom is, to respire, dilate, refrigerate or refresh: hence spirit, wind, &c. It is the instrument of compression

pression to every thing, and principally of vegetative motion to plants, and respiration to animals. From $\pi\pi\pi$ comes $\pi\pi\pi$ vapor, odor, that which the spirit carries to the nostrils, and gives the sensation of smell. It is applied, Job xiv. 8. to the fine corpuscles of vegetable matter contained in water as their vehicle, which the action of the $\pi\pi\pi$ spirit with the light carries up into seed or vegetables, for its formation and augmentation. By means of the reek of water, it, viz. the tree, will germinate. In Dan. iii. 27. the reek of fire had not left its mark or testimony upon them. Our word, reek, comes from hence, which we apply to the vapour or steam which the expansion of the spirit and light in

a joint action raises from the abyfs, hangs in the air, and is not carried high enough, thinned and difperfed. This word in fcripture is oftener applied to vegetation than to any thing elfe, and when underftood, gives a ftronger idea of it than we can obtain by ten thoufand experiments. There are fome other Englifh words, of immediate derivation from this Hebrew one, which, while the modern philofopher knows not, nor confiders, his pride as with birdlime will be held by the plumes, refpecting Nature's procefs to vegetation.

There are other words ufed by our Hebrew philofopher and the prophets, that will give light and pleafure to the rural philofopher who

has curiosity to compare the operations of Nature with the account the original scriptures give of them. The toil will delight all impartial men, who can blot the classic page out; all who are not bewildered and stupefied in the dreams and falsehoods of deism; all who have but a spark of reason left in their breasts; that will be sufficient to discover the congenial relation subsisting between God's word and his works.

נֶר is one of those words; its idea is that of an instrument to convey light; it is translated a candlestick, lamp, light, fire; and when the jod is found in the place of the vau, it is to plow land, to fallow ground; our English word nerve is derived from

from it; and the office of the nerves in the human body may with great certainty be known by it; but not till all the lumber of the modern philosophy be got clear out of the head; for while that remains, truth cannot enter; while that exists in the mind, a comment on the word will be similar to putting a jewel of gold into a swine's snout. He that cannot see the compatibility of the ideas under this word recited above, will have but an obscure notion of the physical reason of plowing or fallowing the ground.

I cannot better convey the idea of the operation of Nature upon fallowed land, than by going back to the infancy of Nature, when its primordial light was diffused, and protruded

truded through every part of it, to
nervate, give life, energy, and firm-
ness, till it breathed perfection thro'
the whole: and now it is collected,
it with prolific vigor finds new plants
to quicken, new fruits to fill, while
its exuberant stores enliven the earth,
and all its joyous inhabitants.

I know our modern lexicographers
will not agree to the account I have
given of this word: but I fought not
for authorities, till I had written my
own thoughts; after that, I found
Mario de Calasio, Francis Ximenes
archbishop of Toledo in Spain, and
John Arguery, three learned lin-
guists, my supporters.

If it be objected here, that my
reasoning is not conclusive; that I
have raised the expectation of the
reader

reader too high ; and that I assume
 too much ; I answer by asserting
 more ; and if my life were at my
 own disposal, would pledge it for
 the performance : i. e. that the most
 barren acre of land (provided it be
 not all sand, nor all rock) may be
 made as profitable to the owner, at
 an expence not to be named, as any
 acre of land he has in his possession.
 That this is a reality and to be done,
 depends not on my assertion or any
 other man's, but on the original con-
 stitution of Nature, confirmed by
 experience ; and the execution easy.
 No man has now the right to bur-
 lesque or censure me for not telling
 him the manner of doing it ; nor to
 give me the lie if I refuse. I stand
 ready to give proof of what I have
 ad-

advanced ; but not to every one that may demand it : for the man on a full gallop on his hobby-horse, pursuing shadows, honours, places, pensions, power ; accumulating, funding, trafficking, with the balances of deceit in his hands, is just as fit to reason about, or to concern himself with, the operative effects of Nature, as a mole is to reason about the stars : he is sunk into himself, lost to society, and hates every man he cannot make a prey of. Into such hands I was once decoyed, but hope to avoid them for the future.

Thus far I stand upon firm ground, but may say as Mr. Woollaston does in his Religion of Nature delineated, I can go no farther for want of a revelation. Those who, from an innate

nate pride would know more of the principles of Nature than was ever revealed, will always grope in ignorance, and be disappointed: for it is presumed impossible to arrive at an adequate knowledge of that physical grain, put into the various sorts of animals, vegetables, &c. by the God of Nature, by which they are specified and become what they are, and distinct from all others. I decline the task; for I know not how the wormwood becomes bitter, the sugar-cane sweet, the hemlock poisonous, &c. nor have I found one man in my life who could tell me why an elephant does not generate a swine, a swine a camel, a camel a goat, &c. or why a general, confused jumble runs not through all Na-

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ture;

ture; or why jumarts, mules, &c. cannot generate at all. In those, and a million of other instances, I find my understanding nonplused: nor is there a man to be found, who has improved upon Moses, Gen. i. 11, 12. or upon Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 38. I could indeed give a catalogue of authors, who in their own conceit were never nonplused; but would have their readers think they have explored all nature: but I am an infidel to them, and they are infidels to me. The alchemists indeed pretend a wonderful knowledge of Nature, as if they had been of the council at its formation: they would make you believe they can produce animals without a female; that they can infuse the specific tincture that
shall

shall transmute the base metals into gold; but a more ignorant and impudent contrariety to the mechanical laws of Nature was never affirmed: and notwithstanding lord Bacon, and the honourable Robert Boyle, and an infinity of other great names, were alchemists, I scruple not to affirm, that they were in this matter knaves, or fools, or both. Ovid knew more of the philosophy of Moses than all the modern philosophers together, and understood him better than all our commentators in folio: they seem to know no more of the writings of Moses than an owl does of musick. Henry, Stackhouse, Gill, &c. have wasted much paper to no other purpose that I can find, but to keep the readers

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in ignorance, and vend their own conundrums. Ovid sang nothing more than the changes of Nature, the metamorphosis of the general unspecified, or general form mentioned above into particular bodies, and their dissolution into that unspecified state again in an infinite variety; disguised indeed by his own language, and dressed in fable to conceal whence he had it.

The theogony of the gods is such another affair; and when the youth at school stands with his understanding confounded at the strangeness of the tale, his reverend tutor is so great a stranger to the revelation of God, and to the agency of Nature therein explained, that he can give his pupil no information.

Will

Will any man deny this to be the present state of our school-learning? or that it has not been censured by the greatest men in England and France? or that it is not a rank paradox in practice, to initiate our youth into, and ground them on, the shameful errors and horrors of heathenism, in order to their being christian philosophers and divines? Where is the man that dares deny or justify this? Is it not similar to putting a man's eyes out and then blaming him for stumbling? or appointing a shepherd to guide a ship to the great South-sea, and wondering that he runs her on the rocks? Dear Dr. Warburton assist here, and tell us if this was not your own mishap, when you wrote the Divine
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Legation? Right reverend Sir, tell us, if this be the case, whether a man might not as well hear a tinker preach, as a B. or an A. B? the one can read Moses in the translation, the other can do no more: I believe I have here to except Dr. Lowth only. Or why may I not as well go to the mariner to learn agriculture, as to the first-rate philosopher in Europe? for aught that I have seen, the former knows nearly as much of the matter as the latter.

How happens this? It happens by the pride of our classical gentlemen, who squint, overlook, and spurn at the mechanism of Nature taught us by Moses and the prophets, otherwise as absolutely undiscoverable as America would have been to the first

voy-

voyager without rudder or compass : yet if they believe not Moses and the prophets, neither will they believe, tho' one rose from the dead. Had I treated the matter with mystic cant, they would have had a right to claim a farther explication of it from me ; but as I have not, except in the quotation below, they have not. I have led them into the house where the treasure is open to view ; if their pagan learning has bewildered them so that they cannot make a plain inference, I cannot help it.

It will be objected no doubt, What is this man doing ? he is censuring the whole circle of modern learning, as containing very little truth ; he is pulling down, but why does he not build up, and tell us at once what is the

the physical cause of vegetation, and what that method of cultivation is which Moses and the prophets taught? he answers, he could tell it in ten words; but it is so simple, that our wise-acres would kick at and reject it; it is so natural, that our preternatural philosophers, our false-reasoning tribe would stop their noses at it, because it came from Moses. Besides, as he can expect nothing but to be insulted and abused by the reviewers and the rusticks for what he has said, he has the same dissuasive from saying more, that he has from preaching christianity in Constantinople.

Had I given it in Pythagoras's language, as he taught it his disciples,

Stars

Stars above, stars beneath :
 Heaven above, heaven beneath.
 Whatever is above, the same is
 beneath.

Know this, and be happy.
 I had been blameable ; but I have
 given it, not in mystic, but as Mo-
 ses delivered it, in plain language ;
 our gentlemen may take which they
 please : but it is presumed they will
 reject both, and censure me for writ-
 ting. Be it so. What I have writ-
 ten I have written. I have told them
 the truth, and leave them to their
 option.

But it will yet be objected, that
 most of the barren land in this king-
 dom is by antient custom, i, e. by
 the common law of the land, the
 unalienable property of the crown,

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or

or of the poor who have the right of commonage. Be it so. If it were put into tilth, would not the public be gainers, and those proprietors also? But if it be as above, why have our senators enacted the enclosure of so much common land as they have in a few years past? If they were right in that, it cannot be wrong to enclose more. But since, without enclosing more, the waste land in the kingdom might be cultivated and improved, to the immense profit of the community, and without any damage to individuals, why should it be any longer neglected?

I confess there is a knot in the enclosure of commons which it is hard to untie: I doubt there is a fraud in it, that while the interest of a few
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individuals is consulted, the publick is cheated; for by enclosing common land, what do we but produce more corn to feed our enemies, and starve our own poor; and rear more horses, to mount our enemies cavalry, to kill our friends and allies? We have demonstration that, while we raise corn and horses for exportation, we diminish the breed of cattle and sheep; whereby the price of our provisions, hides, pelts, and wool is advanced at home, and our poor gradually perishing, our trade lost, and our enemies getting the advantage of us in these and other articles, and laughing at our folly. Our leather is at an exorbitant price, with a tax of two hundred thousand pounds per annum upon it, and our manufactu-

rers in that, as well as other branches, are pining in poverty and disgust, while our gentlemen, jockeys, jobbers, graziers, carcase-butchers, corn-factors, millers, smugglers, and right-honourables, are laughing at us. But, says the ministerial babbler, how does this appear, and who is to blame for it? Almost every one knows, what would be dangerous for any man to speak; and also to make that appear; and who the guilty wretches are that ought to be hanged for injuring their country highly; but in doing it, a man would run the risque of being hanged himself: therefore, to avoid the danger of offending a den of *****, we must leave the reader to his own reflections: if he knows the world, he is no stranger to
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to the true portrait of man ; a large field is open before him ; but it is prohibited ground, no man may tread it with safety : therefore whatever we may think, I shall only mention a few things, which lie open to every one's observation. It is very obvious, that mankind in general will by fraud or by force turn every thing in office, trade, &c. into a jobb, to get what they can ; and when they have once got hold of it, to keep it, and trample upon all who stand in their way. Notwithstanding, tho' we are as it were muzzled for the present, it will appear (perhaps when it is too late) that the evils complained of above, with many others, are objects of such importance as would awaken and engage the attention

tion of the greatest men in any kingdom upon earth, that was not under an infatuation.

But those evils, with an infinity of others that might be mentioned, seem to increase upon us, and may terminate in the total destruction of the kingdom.

If we had not a supply of young cattle and sheep from Scotland and Wales, I would ask any man of sense, in what condition we should be in three years time? and whether, but for that supply, we could hold out so long? or if we did, our provisions would not be advanced more than fifty per cent? or whether a less advance than that, or their continuing long at the present price, will not as surely sink the kingdom,

as a mill-stone would sink a duck? or whether the rise of rents in town and country, and the illegal monopoly of farms, be not a source in itself quite sufficient to effect our dissolution? But while we are precipitately running into ruin, misled by French gold and bad policy, while our rivals laugh at and supplant us, we suffer diminution of our sheep, cattle, hides, pelts, and wool, to supply their markets, and smuggle back their goods for payment, while we ourselves are so deficient in wool, hides, pelts, &c. that if our poor could afford the coarsest cloathing to cover themselves and children, we should not have enough for our home-consumption. Wooden shoes would help us mainly in the leather trade;

trade: nor have I any doubt but ere long they will be in fashion, unless we chuse to go barefoot; for at present matters are so contrived by our wiseacres, that tho' there is scarcely any exportation of shoes, yet our shoemakers can hardly get leather enough, at an exorbitant price, for our home-trade. It is the same with the other manufacturers of leather, while they pay more than forty per cent. advance upon the price it was at thirty years ago. There is now but little cloth, and less camlets, exported; yet there is no surplus of wool, except to supply our rivals the French, as above.

The present high price of provisions is one principal means to ruin the trade of the kingdom, and

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to enslave us ; and had our superiors intended the happiness or the peace of the kingdom, they would long ere now have prevented the scandalous and illegal measures that have been taken to advance them yet higher. They must know their legal interposition would now lower them at least twenty per cent. Besides, there are, within fifty miles of London, more than five hundred thousand acres of land at present hardly of any use to rich or poor : is it good policy, in the present situation, to let it remain useless ?

The Almighty, in his formation of the world, hath secured us from total destruction by the designs of evil-minded men, who if they could would starve the whole world, for

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what themselves don't want: the hills and many of the downs, where our sheep and young cattle are bred, are in many or most places too steep for plowing, and most of the heaths, &c. now barren, their owners not knowing how to make them answer the expence of cultivation; so that for our not being their half-starved slaves we owe them no thanks. But surely the very lowest use that should be made of our barren and uncultivated land should be, to make it pay the poors-rate all over the kingdom; and if that were treble what it now is, it would not only defray the expence, but there would be a surplus to raise our reputation, more than all the little, low, and oppressive schemes of our late financiers, provided

vided you could prevent the beasts of prey from running away with it, or turning it into a jobb ; but I am afraid that is as impossible as to cure a sheep-killing dog, after he has tasted blood. On the sea-coasts in the south we never hang those blood-sucking animals, but sell them to the fishermen, or rather barter them for fish ; when they want bait for their crabs and lobsters, they knock their brains out, and make use of their flesh for that purpose. Custom time immemorial has established this into a kind of a law ; and a most equitable one it is, to make the dog that has wantonly robbed us of our mutton repay us in fish.

Our fish in general is more than four hundred per cent. dearer than

it was thirty years ago, owing altogether to the artifice of designing men; for there is as much fish on our coasts, and as easily caught, now as then; enough in the seas that surround us to sustain the whole kingdom, if all were caught that might, and a few of the jobbers hanged; and till that be done, it will be in vain to catch fish, or cultivate land; or at least to think the poor will ever be the better for it. The catching more fish, and cultivating more land, and confining that land to small farms, and limiting or prohibiting our exports, is that alone that will or can effectually reduce the high price of provisions, and prevent the migration of our craftsmen to America, and preserve our poor
from

from starving at home: but this can never be done while jobbing is indulged.

Mr. Benjamin Mott, in his Philosophical transactions abridged, attempts to demonstrate, that South-Britain contains seventy-two thousand square miles, or 46,800,000 acres; and the province of Holland is computed to contain about one million of acres, and to sustain two million four hundred thousand souls; so that England, to be proportionably populous, must have one hundred and ten millions of people: but to make room for people of all degrees under our British monarchy, if England were half as populous as Holland, with only fifty-five millions of people, it would be a good pro-

proportion ; but that would be near four times our present number. But the province of Holland could not subsist such a number, were it not for their plenty of fish : but have the Hollanders a greater plenty of fish than the seas surrounding England afford us ? if not, how comes it to pass that they supply our markets with fish, and carry away such immense sums of ready money as they do every summer ? is not this owing to the profoundness of English policy ? Yes ; and it is so deep, that all nations are strangers to it besides. And even amongst ourselves it is an impenetrable secret, known only to the cabinet.

When the fasts of the church, and Lent, were kept more than they are
now,

now, flesh of course was cheaper, and would be so now, had we fish enough to keep up those political institutions.

If we look back to king Henry the eighth's time, we find it enacted to sell butchers-meat by weight, beef at a halfpenny, mutton at three farthings per pound. Look back to Edward the third's time, we find wheat sold at two shillings per quarter, a fat ox at ten shillings, a fat sheep at eight-pence, six pigeons for a penny, a fat goose for two-pence, and a pig for a penny, and all other things in proportion.

We all know how to estimate the difference between those times and the present, and the peculiar privilege we enjoy in having a roasting
pig

pig at our table now for five shillings : an emolument this, unknown and unheard of in any nation upon the face of the earth, but this. All nations no doubt must and do stand amazed at the profundity of our policy and wisdom. But while our wise politicians are wrapping themselves in their fools paradise, and singing a requiem to their own souls, if it be enquired what the consequences of the continued rise of the price of provisions will and must be ? a man needs not the spirit of prophecy to answer, that unless their present high price lower, and their advance for the future beyond a certain sum be prevented, no policy can save this kingdom from destruction : for as the price of things must
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and will be raised in proportion to the price of provisions, it must make us the market to receive the commodities of every country whose price of things is cheaper than ours ; and this must and will be the case, while our money lasts. This is the ground of the whole smuggling trade ; nor will duties, nor prohibitions, nor an increase of the revenue-officers, operate here to prevent it. Nor shall we be able to carry our goods to any nation where things are cheaper than ours. Moreover, such nations will hence be enabled to set up many of our manufactories, and by their cheapness so interfere in our trade in all foreign markets, and even in our own colonies, as to turn the balance of trade against us : nor

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can any man deny this to be our present case. It is presumed therefore the only remedy here is, to keep our cultivation upon a proportion with the number of our people, and to prevent the exportation of every thing that has a tendency to raise the price of provisions. The more land there is cultivated, the greater will the plenty of all things be, the necessaries of life become cheaper, the greater number of people employed, and thereby the number of our poor lessened, and the revenue increased. Those are truths never to be denied.

The natural means, therefore, of restoring this kingdom to its former glory is, the cultivation of a certain part of her waste land: for if the
hills

hills and downs that feed our sheep and young cattle be not preserved as it were sacred, the loss sustained on our wool, hides, &c. will be greater than the gain obtained by cultivation. There are gentlemen in Wales, who have flocks of sheep to the amount of fifteen thousand, who could not breed one third of that number if their right of commonage were taken from them. It is the same in England and Scotland. But while we raise corn, wool, horses, &c. for our rivals, all expedients will be vain, and the provisions continue to rise till this kingdom sinks.

If the East-Indians had no more policy than is to be found amongst us, their extended trade must cease

and be no more ; nor would it be the interest of the East-India company to send another ship thither. The cheapness of their provisions is the sole cause of the extensiveness of their trade : from thence it is that the wages of their labouring people in most parts of the country do not exceed two-pence sterling per day : yet there can be no doubt but their craftsmen live as well upon their wages as ours do upon theirs ; for it is certain if they did not, they must be starved.

The Chinese say the Europeans have but one eye : and indeed we do but blink with that. They excel all the world in agriculture ; but acknowledge the reception of its rudiments from the first fathers of mankind,

kind. Their origin may be traced by the names of their objects of worship and of their coins : they knowing that the prosperity of their country, and of their trade, depends solely upon agriculture, make that their chief object. A good husbandman there stands in higher reputation than the first duke in the kingdom does here, because he is of more use to the publick ; a filken son of pleasure is not known there, where they think an idle fellow a nuisance.

Their soil is like ours, yet they never lose a crop by fallowing, but keep their land in constant occupation, and give it no rest, yet obtain better crops than the Europeans can with all their improvements. The emperor himself becomes a plowman

man once a year; the mandarines do the same all over that vast empire.

O ye European princes, “ would
 “ you wish to see abundance to flourish
 “ in your dominions? would you
 “ favour population, and make your
 “ people happy? behold those in-
 “ numerable multitudes that over-
 “ spread the territories of China,
 “ who have not a shred of ground
 “ uncultivated! It is liberty, it is
 “ the undisturbed right of property,
 “ that has established a cultivation
 “ so flourishing, under the auspices
 “ of which this people have increa-
 “ sed as the grains which cover their
 “ fields.

“ Does the glory of being the
 “ most powerful and the happiest of
 “ fove-

"sovereigns touch your ambition ?
 "turn your eyes towards Peking, and
 "behold the most powerful of mor-
 "tal beings, seated on the throne
 "of Reason : he does not com-
 "mand, but instruct ; his words are
 "not decrees, they are maxims of
 "justice and wisdom ; his people
 "obey him, because his orders are
 "dictated by equity alone. He is
 "the most powerful of men, reign-
 "ing in the hearts of the most nu-
 "merous society in the world, who
 "constitute his family. He is the
 "richest of sovereigns, drawing from
 "an extent of territory six hundred
 "leagues square, cultivated even to
 "the summits of the mountains, the
 "tenth of those abundant harvests it
 "produces : this he considers as the
 "wealth of his children, and he
 "huf-

“ husbands it with care. To sum
 “ up all, he is the happiest of mo-
 “ narchs, tastes every day the inex-
 “ pressible pleasure of giving happi-
 “ ness to millions, and alone en-
 “ joying the undivided satisfaction
 “ which his subjects share, his chil-
 “ dren ! all to him alike dear, all
 “ living like brothers, in freedom
 “ and abundance, under his protec-
 “ tion. He is called the son of Tien,
 “ as the true and most perfect image
 “ of heaven, whose benevolence he
 “ imitates, and his grateful people
 “ adore him as a god, because he
 “ conducts himself like a man.”

This quotation is from M. le Pou-
 vre : it is a mirror held before the
 little dirty despots of Europe, to shew
 their deformity.

F I N I S.

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